

Alcohol and gambling companies' political donations surge in election year

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Community organisations are calling for an end to political donations by alcohol and gambling companies, and their lobby groups.

New data released this week shows alcohol and gambling companies and their lobby groups donated millions of dollars to Australian political parties around last year's Federal election, prompting renewed calls from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and Alliance for Gambling Reform (AGR) to end political donations from these harmful industries.

The data, published on The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Transparency Register covers donation figures for the financial year 2024 –25.

The data reveals donations from alcohol and gambling companies and their lobby groups more than doubled in the 2024-25 financial year compared to 2023-24, which total more than \$5.2 million.

This underlines the value alcohol and gambling companies see in lending their financial support to political parties, particularly in an election year when policy agendas are being set and sold to the public.

Alcohol causes significant harm in the community through injury, violence, mental ill-health, chronic disease, family violence and disadvantage. A [2025 study found 1 in 2 people](#) are negatively affected by others' alcohol use.

FARE CEO Ayla Chorley said, "Communities expect that when governments make decisions affecting their health, their children, and their families, those decisions will be made free from the influence of alcohol and gambling companies."

"We've seen these corporations, and their lobby groups, successfully lobby to delay and even halt common-sense measures that would reduce harm from alcohol in the community.

"A ban on political donations from alcohol and gambling companies and their lobby groups is a critical step to strengthen our democracy and ensure we continue to see governments implementing measures that prioritise our community's wellbeing over industry profit."

Companies that profit exclusively from alcohol and their lobby groups donated \$1,906,701 in 2024-25; while companies that profit exclusively from gambling and their lobby groups donated \$579,003. Those that profit from both alcohol and gambling donated \$2,718,416.

The Australian Hotels Association was the biggest donor. Of alcohol and gambling related donations, the Liberal and National Parties received over 50%, with the Australian Labor Party closely behind.

AGR CEO Martin Thomas said there was a 'cynical pattern' to political donations from the gambling industry with more donations coming when new regulations were being considered.

"This has nothing to do with supporting the democratic process and all about seeking to buy influence and forestall gambling harm reforms that are being considered by the Federal Government." he said.

"The government can still show leadership and support critically needed gambling reform - that the majority of the Australian public want. In doing so they can dispel any sense that the gambling lobby can buy favours."

-ENDS-

Media outlets are requested to promote help-seeking information when reporting on alcohol and other drugs, in line with the [Mindframe National Guidelines](#). Suggested wording relating to this media story: *If you or someone you know needs support, please call Lifeline 13 11 14, the National 24/7 Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline 1800 250 015 or 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732.*

Available for interview:

- FARE CEO Ayla Chorley
- AGR CEO Martin Thomas

Media contact:

Kate Lewis | media@fare.org.au | 0429 291 120

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is a not-for-profit organisation with a vision for an Australia free from alcohol harms – where communities are healthy and well and where laws, policies and programs are fair, equitable and just. Working with local communities, people with lived experience of alcohol harm, values-aligned organisations, health professionals, researchers and governments across the nation, we are improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia. To learn more about us and our work visit www.fare.org.au